

In the case of MMTC, there is only one post belonging to ST category in Group 'D' lying vacant at its Corporate Office. The post is to be filled up through direct recruitment for which MMTC has initiated action.

Pension to Pensioners of Desert Area of Rajasthan

491. COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the government have received any representation from retired Central Government Employees and Ex-servicemen regarding payment of pension to the pensioners of under-developed, backward, desert areas of Rajasthan through Thar Anchalik Gramin Banks;

(b) if so, whether the Government is considering disbursement of pension through Thar Anchalik Gramin Banks located in interior area, especially considering number of problems being faced by old aged persons; and

(c) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The Central Pension Accounting Office and the Controller General of Defence Accounts who administer the payment of pensions for civilians and Defence Personnel respectively have confirmed that they have not received any representation from the retired Central Government employees and Ex-servicemen regarding payment of pension to the pensioners of under-developed, backward, desert areas of Rajasthan, through Thar Anchalik Gramin Banks.

(b) and (c) In view of (a) the question does not arise.

UNDP Aid in Handicrafts Sector

492. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government and UNDP propose to launch "Wood crafts" projects to harness the existing potential of the handicrafts sector in Southern India;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the new projects;

(c) whether there is any proposal to set up "Wood Seasoning" Plant at Mysore for technology upgradation and focus on design development of wood crafts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government with assistance from UNDP proposes to launch "Promoting Exports of wood based handicrafts" project to harness the potential of handicrafts sector in Southern India as well as in Northern India. The total estimated cost of this new project is around Rs. 5.60 crores. Under the project wood

seasoning plant are proposed to be set up at Trivandrum and Jodhpur only.

[*Translation*]

New Coal Reserves

493. SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge reserve of coal has been identified in Raigarh district of Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the quality of coal available therein; and

(c) the time by which the mining is likely to be started there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b) Raigarh District encompasses major part of Mand-Raigarh coalfield in Madhya Pradesh. The total coal reserves (upto 600 metres depth) estimated as on 1.1.1997 by Geological Survey of India (GSI) of this coalfield are 9824.63 million tonnes. Of these reserves 7843.90 million tonnes are in the proved/indicated category and 1980.73 are in the inferred category. The grade-wise break-up of the coal reserves in proved and indicated category are given below:

Grades (Non-coking coal)	Quantity (In Million Tonnes)
A	208.44
B	105.09
C	350.15
D	642.73
E, F&G	6537.49

(c) Two underground mines and one opencast mine are in operation in Raigarh Coalfield.

Tribunals

494. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some tribunals were set up with a view to remove delay in justice and provide speedy justice;

(b) if so, when these tribunals were set up;

(c) whether the objectives of these tribunals have not been achieved;

(d) if so, the reasons therefore;

(e) the number of cases pending, till date, tribunal-wise; and

(f) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to streamline the functioning of these tribunals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a), (c), (d) & (f) A number of Tribunals have been set up by the Government under various Acts for dealing with cases arising under these Acts. These Tribunals are under the administrative control of various Ministries/Departments of Government of India.

(b) and (e) The Income-tax Appellate Tribunal and the Foreign Exchange Regulation Appellate Board which are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Law and Justice were set up on 5.1.1941 and 1.1.1974 respectively. The number of cases pending in the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal (as on 1.10.1997) and the FERA Board (as on 18.11.97) are 3,00,939 and 4516 respectively.

New Automobile Policy

495. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH:
SHRI ANAND RATAN MAURYA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to formulate any new Automobile policy to explore the potential of export of spare parts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) The Exim Policy provides the framework for exports including export of automotive spare parts. Since the import of CKD/SKD kits of passenger cars is restricted under Exim Policy, policy guidelines were formulated in the year 1995 for issuance of import licences to the joint venture auto companies for the import of CKD/SKD kits by way of signing MoU's of such companies with the Government of India. One of the parameters stipulated under the MoU was exports to be performed by MoU signing companies on the basis of projections made by them. These guidelines are subject to review by the Government, when the need arises.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Saree Scam

496. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA :
SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV :
DR. BALIRAM :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Association of Corporations and Apex Societies of Handloom (ACASH) had committed a big scam in the supply of dhoties and sarees to Bihar;

(b) is so, whether the Government have conducted any inquiry in this regard:

(c) if so, the details thereof and the total amount involved therein; and

(d) the action taken/being taken by the Government against the guilty persons and ACASH?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) Certain complaints have been received, alleging that some of the Dhoties and Sarees supplied by Association of Corporations and Apex Societies of Handloom (ACASH) to Government of Bihar were produced on powerloom instead of handloom. Immediately, the matter was referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for preliminary enquiry. As internal enquiry was also conducted by the Textile Commissioner under Ministry of Textiles. This was again referred to CBI for investigation. The CBI has registered the case and the matter is under their investigation of the total actual supplies of approximately Rs. 35.40 crores to Government of Bihar, the actual value of supplies produced on powerlooms will be known after enquiry.

(b) Pending receipt of the Findings of CBI, the then Chairman, ACASH has been transferred and an official of the ACASH handling the subject matter has been placed under suspension.

Deregulation of Coal Prices

497. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have deregularised the coal prices to improve generation of internal financial resources of coal companies;

(b) if so, the extent to which this decision is likely to facilitate in implementing the new projects and modernisation of the existing mines;

(c) whether the Government have also identified any blocks of the Coal India Ltd. with estimated reserves of 18856 million tonnes for captive mining by private and public sector companies;

(d) if so, the details of such coal blocks identified for the purpose and the names of the private and public sector companies which have been offered for mining; and

(e) the time by which these mining blocks are likely to be handed over for captive mining?